MOTION OF THANKS ON THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Further discussion on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address, Prof. P.J. Kurien. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI MATILAL SARKAR (Tripura): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I would like to bring to the notice of the Government that the Field Workers of the Life Insurance Corporation of India are going to stage a demonstration today. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No. There is no Zero Hour today. ...*(Interruptions)*... There is no Zero Hour today. ...*(Interruptions)*... It has been made clear to you that there is no Zero Hour today. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Sir, I would like to invite attention of the hon. Minister to this and request the Minister to concede their demands. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You can raise it some other time. ...*(Interruptions)* .. Please sit down. ...*(Interruptions)*... Please sit down. ...*(Interruptions)*...

श्री सदानारायण पाणि (उड़ीसा): सर, भारतीय जीवन बीमा निगम के प्राइवेटाइजेशन के खिलाफ हजारों कर्मचारी प्रदर्शन कर रहे हैं। ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री उपसभापति: नहीं, आप बैठिए। पाणि जी, आप बैठिए।

श्री सदानारायण पाणि: इसके प्राइवेटाइजेशन की साजिश की जा रही है। ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री उपसभापति: आप बैठिए। पाणि जी, आप बैठिए। Nothing will go on record. ...*(Interruptions)*... Nothing will go on record. ...*(Interruptions)*... Prof. P.J. Kurien. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SITARAM YECHURI (West Bengal): Sir, I reuqest you to place it on record that he has raised it. ...*(Interruptions)*... Then the matter is over. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He has raised it. ...*(Interruptions)*... अरे हो गया, आप बैठिए। आपका नाम आ जाएगा।

PROF. P.J. KURIEN (Kerala): Thank you, Sir, for calling me. I am rising to support the Motion of Thanks on President's Address. Already many hon. Members have spoken and many points have been raised here. I will try to be brief and not repeat the points which have already been raised. I am expressing some of the concerns. The president's Address has already commended the growth rate which is, one an average, nine per cent. We are expecting to maintain that growth in the Eleventh Plan and, if possible to increase. My first concern is this: Will it be possible, when we don't take adequate steps, to control the population explosion? That is the first point which I would like to raise. Today, in our country, there are no incentives or disincentives for population control.

Nowadays, the term "population control" is not used; what we use is "population stablisation"; that is okay; any term can be used-because we are also part of the Cairo Declaration where incentives and disincentives have been done away with.

We have also declared that we will achieve the Millennium Development Goal. How will we achieve the Millennium Development Goal unless the population is controlled? I am not for coercive control. Not at all. I am not in favour of medical termination of pregnancy also. But I feel that the attention needed in the direction is not given. Always Members from this side and Members from the other side, especially the Left leaders, speak about China. But we should know that China very rigorously implemented population control programme.

That is one of the reasons why they have achieved the growth rate and progress that they have. Though we should continue the methods of incentives, disincentives, persuasion and prompting so that the population is controlled. Otherwise, all these goals we have set for us will remain a dream.

Secondly, the President has mentioned in her Address about the Dowry Prohibition Act and also the amendment to the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act. Sir, there is the Dowry Prohibition Act. But it is not being implemented in any State of the country. If a person has two or three daughters, he may think of committing suicide. I think some suicides are taking place because of this problem also. Sir, no step is being taken to curtail this menace of dowry in this country. It is there in the President's Address. I thank the President for including this issue in her speech. I know it is the responsibility of the State Governments. The State Government should be forced to implement the Dowry Prohibition Act in proper spirit. I would also like to mention that the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act is also being misused to kill the girl child. It is unfortunate that in the developed States, where people are more eudcated, incidents of female foeticide are on the increase. Sex ratio decline is quite alarming. Recently, I put a question to the Ministry in this regard and also got a reply. In States like Delhi and Punjab where there is higher growth rate, sex ratio is coming down alarmingly. Why is it so? It is because of the female foeticide. I would request the Government to make stringent laws to curtail the incidents of female foeticides. Female foeticide should be considered as murder; otherwise, a day will come when the number of girl child will come down alarmingly and that will be very dangerous for the country.

Sir, the hon. President has mentioned about the growing investment; 35 per cent of GDP. Yes, it is very commendable. But, I have to mention one thing. Certainly, I do not agree with the Left's view. But, yes, there are some areas where we have to be little careful. One such area, which I would, specifically, like to mention, is FDI in retail sector. The retail traders are spread throughout the country, especially in rural areas. There are millions of them. If we allow multinationals and big companies in the retail sector, it will certainly have detrimental effect on the employment of these people and they will become unemployed. Therefore, I request the Government not to allow FDI in retail sector, or, at least it should be moderated so that it does not have deterimental effect on the traders of our country. Yesterday, there was a question in the House. I would like my good friend, Shrimati Brinda Karat, to listen to what I am going to say.

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT (West Bengal): Are you supporting the Women's Reservation Bill?

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: I have said so many other things also.

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: I have heard that.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Then you listen to my complete speech. Sir, she has asked, "Are you supporting the Women's Reservation Bill?" Certainly, yes. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, it cannot go on like this.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Sir, not only me, our Party President, Shrimati Sonia Gandhi, also supports it.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please address the Chair, not Brindaji.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Sir, since she has put this question, I want to say that when I was the

Chief Whip in Lok Sabha, this Bill was introduced. At that time, we were in the opposition. Shrimati Sonia Gandhi called us and said, "You issue a Whip to the Members to support the Women's Reservation Bill." Accordingly, as the Chief Whip, I had issued Whip to the Members to support the Women's Reservation Bill. But the then Government dilly dallied it and could not go ahead with the Bill. So it is not our fault...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Now you are in the Government...

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: You know the reasons...*(Interruptions)*... Sir, their job is that whenever we do anything good, they take the credit for it. And for whatever we cannot do, they will blame us. This is not good. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Sir, one minute. ...*(Interruptions)*... Sir, he is yielding. My only request is that because he is so eloquent on issues relating to women I really appreciate it—let him stretch it a bit and say why, in spite of being so committed to the Bill, they have not mentioned it in the President's Address.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: You are within your right to put that question. But you yourself know the answer...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Kurien, whatever you want to say on the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address, you kindly speak. But do not enter into any dialogue.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Sir, this is*. She knows the answer. Yet she puts the question ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Sir, does he have to use such a word as*. Are you going to allow it?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No; we are removing it.* is unparliamentary ...*(Interruptions)*... It has been removed ...*(Interruptions)*...

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: I withdraw the word. Now, I hope you will listen to me. Sir, Yesterday, there was a Question in Parliament on inflation. When I went through the reply, I noted an interesting point. Till now, our Left friends have been telling us that there is no inflation in China. Every day I have been listening to the speeches made in my State to the effect that there is inflation in India and there is no inflation in China. But the yesterday's answer states that the rate of inflation in China is 6.6 per cent which is more than that in India. ...*(Interruptions)*... I am coming to the point.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let him speak...

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY (Puducherry): Mr. Kurien, you address the Chair.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Not only address me, but we have to also finish in time.

PROF. P. J. KURIEN: Sir, my point is that even though I quite agree with what the hon. Member, Shri Sitaram Yechury, who is a very senior Member, a very good friend of nine, -- no doubt, he speaks effectively and he presents his case poignently. There was one other disinformation that he gave yesterday. He said that there is no 'Hire and fire' in China. But the information that I had gathered is different. I was in charge of the Commerce Ministry for one year in 1993. At that time, when I went to China, I met the Mayor of Shanghai and Mr. Samvedi, an industrialist. And they told me that there was 'Hire and fire'. I do not know

*Not recorded.

about the situation today. But, what they told me then was that wherever there was 'Hire and fire' policy,-it was not there in all factories, but in some sections, it was there—and the salary of the workers was higher than in others. So, I would like to say two things; one is that even in China, there was 'Hire and fire' policy. Secondly, the rate of inflation in China is higher than ours. For many a time we quote China; we say that China is our role model. I do admire that country, their progress and their great civilisation. I was longing to visit China, and once I visited the country, I was very happy. But, Sir, ...(*Interruptions*)... Sir, I am not a foreign policy expert; I am an ordinary man. I am saying that if there is a mistake, they can correct it; they know better. But what I want to point is that the hon. President has mentioned about the nuclear deal and she has only said that we expect that the nuclear deal will go through. I read it in some articles that China has such an agreement with the USA already, and that China is already enjoying the advantages of having such an agreement. I request the hon. Prime Minister to clarify while replying to the debate whether this is true. I would be happy if he clarifies this. But I would like to know, if China has signed such an agreement, if China is taking nuclear energy out of that. Why not India do? (*Interruptions*)

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: What is this, Sir? (*Interruptions*)

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Now, please do not interrupt. I am not asking you to reply ...(*Interruptions*)...I am putting this question to the Prime Minister. ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, no. That is his view. ...(*Interruptions*)... Brindaji, that is his view. I can't prevent him from expressing his view. Let him express it ...(*Interruptions*)...Leave it. ...(*Interruptions*)... The Member is expressing his view. ...(*Interruptions*)...

श्री रुद्रनारायण पाणि: सर, ये रियेक्ट क्यों कर रहे हैं ...(व्यवधान)

श्री उपसभापति: आप क्यों रियेक्ट कर रहे हैं ... (व्यवधान) आपको क्या हुआ, आप बैठिए ... (व्यवधान)

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Sir, I am only requesting the Prime Minister to clarify this position. I would also like to know whether, because of the Chinese signing that agreement, is there any evidence of their surrendering their sovereignty to the USA. I would like that question to be answered.

I have been hearing people saying that we are surrendering our sovereignty by entering into this nuclear deal. ...(*Interruptions*)... I have a doubt here. I have already mentioned that I am not a foreign policy expert. I was only a physics teacher and that had nothing to do with foreign policy. Now, a lot has been said, Sir, that because we did not support. ...(*Interruptions*)... Sir, they are provoking me; so, I will speak more.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, no. Don't get provoked because you have limited time.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Now, Sir, I come to my next point. We did not support the nuclear designs of Iran, it has been said that we did that at the instance of the USA. This is the allegation that I have been hearing here as well as outside. But I would like to say one thing. Sir, when India exploded the nuclear bomb, our party had supported it; even though Congress had made the nuclear bomb and it was ready for explosion, we did not explode it. Of course, Indira Gandhi had exploded it earlier. But, later on, when the BJP exploded the nuclear bomb, we did not oppose it; we were happy. ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI SURENDRA LATH (Orissa): When we had exploded it, Dr. Manmohan Singh had opposed it .(*Interruptions*)... You are misleading the House. ...(*Interruptions*)...

प्रो॰ पी॰ जे॰ कुरियन: अरे, आप सुनिए, आगे सुनिए। ...*(Interruptions)*... My Point is only that when that was done. ...*(Interruptions)*... Please. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH (Jharkhand): Sir, who is taking down the notes?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Home Minister is there.

SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH: That is what I want to know whether he is taking down the notes.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He is taking down the notes.

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL) : Everything said here is being recorded.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Sir, when the nuclear explosion was carried out in that year, the Left Parties at that time had taken a stand that India should not have exploded the nuclear bomb. They had conducted rallies also against the explosion. Now they are taking the position that India should have supported the nuclear policy of Iran. Is it not a contradictory stand? India should not have a bomb, but Iran should have a bomb! Sir, what stand is it.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I would not like to remind you about it because you are in the panel of Vice-Chairmen. But your time is over. Today, the reply of the hon Prime Minister is fixed at ...*(Interruptions)*...

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: They have taken a lot of my time. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Sir, why is he taking the name of the Left? ...*(Interruptions)*... He is totally confused as to what the position is.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: They have taken my time. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Sir, what is it?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He likes you. ...*(Interruptiohs)*... He likes the Left. That is why he is taking the name of the Left. ...*(Interruptions)*...

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Sir, I will take only five minutes. They have taken a lot of my time. ...*(Interruptions)*... I want five minutes more. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: You got the certificate that you like the left. ...*(Interruptions)*...

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Sir, all that I am saying is, when our Prime Minister takes a stand they say it is surrendering. This is an insult. I am saying that this is an insult. They should remember and everybody should remember that Dr. Manmohan Singh is the only Prime Minister who had the guts to denounce, on the American soil, the Iraq invasion. I remember the newspaper reports of that time. I am talking with reference to the newspapers. When the media in Washington asked our Prime Minister about the Iraq invasion of USA, he condemned it on the American soil.

SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH: When was that? ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Prof. Kurien, please conclude.

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA (Rajasthan): Why are you interrupting like this? ...*(Interruptions)*...

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Sir, you please protect me. ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH: I was just asking as to when it happened.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Bagrodia, please sit down. ...(*Interruptions*)...

श्रीमती वृंदा कारत: कब हुआ?

श्री उपसभापति: आप बैठिए प्लीज? Please conclude, Prof. Kurien.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: I am concluding, Sir. What I am saying is that this country is a great country. When I read that news in the newspapers, I was so proud and happy that our Prime Minister on the American soil condemned the Iraq invasion. ...(*Interruptions*)... Sir, what is this?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You please address the Chair. आप बैठिए प्लीज। वह उठते हैं तो आप भी उठते हैं, फिर फर्क क्या हुआ, आप बैठिए।

SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH: When did it happen? ...(*Interruptions*)...

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Sir, am I saying anything unparliamentary?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It is for me to decide whether you are saying anything unparliamentary or parliamentary. ...(*Interruptions*)... Please go ahead. ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH: When did it happen...(*Interruptions*)...

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Sir, I also sometime sit in that Chair and protect the right of every Member to speak. Why am I not being allowed to speak. ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You please don't take note of whatever they are saying. ...(*Interruptions*)...

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Sir, what I am saying is only this. I am pained and that is why I am saying this. I am really pained because there is the whole campaign inside the House and noisily outside. I am from Kerala. I am hearing every day speeches saying that here is a Prime Minister who surrendered to USA. No, don't have such a campaign. That is all what I am saying. Dr. Manmohan Singh, of all the people, I believe, is one person who can never surrender our interest. He is such a great personality, clean personality, then, why should we say like that? That is why I am pained. That is why I am saying this.

Sir, not only that. I would say that no country can cow down this country. India is such a great country that nobody can cow down us. Sir, during the time of Nixon, in the Pakistan War, America sent the seventh fleet. Smt. Indira Gandhi said, "Go back to America". Then, what happened, everybody knows. This country is not like that. Sir, America tried to cow down Cuba, a small country. Nothing happened. If they cannot cow down Cuba; if they cannot browbeat Cuba, can they browbeat India? It cannot happen. ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Kurien, there are another six Members who have to speak on this. Kindly help us to conclude the debate in time ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE (West Bengal): Sir, there was an allegation ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, no; Members cannot go on interrupting the Member that you should say like this and you cannot say like this. Whatever he has to say, he should

say. The Member has the right to say whatever he wants to say. ...(*Interruptions*)... That is all right. ...(*Interruptions*)... That is your view. Let him express his view.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Sir, I am saying it with a painful heart. That is all what I am saying. Therefore, this campaign of this great country becoming subservient to USA is an insult. That campaign itself is an insult. I would request that it should be stopped. Whether you agree with the Nuclear Deal or not, it is another matter. We may agree; we may not agree. But, I am taking strong objection to this kind of campaign. That is what I am saying. Sir, I am just concluding. Sir finally I don't agree with the argument that we should over-exploit our resources of coal and gas and not import nuclear fuel and do not go for nuclear energy. Instead of over-exploiting our resources, it is prudent that we go for nuclear energy ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please conclude, Mr. Kurien. ...(*Interruptions*)... Please conclude. ...(*Interruptions*)... You have already taken half-an-hour. ...(*Interruptions*)...

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Sir, I always obey the Chair, therefore, I conclude. I support the Motion of Thanks. Thank you very much. ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No; no. Mr. Ramachandraiah, please sit down. ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL (Maharashtra): Sir, I have gone through the President's Address line-by-line. It is very long. I will not refer to it point by point for the time is bound to be limited. I will touch upon only 4-5 points. One, farmers' suicide in Maharashtra, Punjab, and even in Punjab' second, the Golden Quadrilateral, a prestigious project initiated by Vajpayee Government, has a very tardy progress; three, terrorism and naxalism, anytime, anywhere the attacks may take place, the number of deaths is increasing; fourth, problem of rising prices; and fifth, big mismatch between power generation and demand.

Just two days ago, in the Hindustan Times, they have given, which I think are latest, some figures — waiver of loans worth Rs. 60,000 crores; 80 suicides in Vidarbha in January; 67 suicides in February; half-an-before the Finance Minister completed his speech in a district in Vidarbha, one Shri Durgaprasad, swallowed pesticide pills and died; just 22 day before PM's visit, one Shri Gosavi too swallowed pesticide pills and died. Why does it happen? Who do they commit suicide? The minimum support price is not remunerative. They stand at 1996 levels, whereas the input costs have gone up considerably; 1,50,000 in five States, mainly cash crop areas, from 1997 to 2005; in the four States, which I have named earlier, the farm suicides are twice than the non-farm suicides, it is 52 per cent against 23 per cent. Women and tenant farmers are not included in it. As per 2001 Census, there is a low rate of suicides, maybe, due to the elections there. On an average, it is informed, that three *kisans commit* suicide every day in Vidarbha. It is an alarming number. If these figures are reduced only to statistics, then I think, we should be a distressed nation. There is a NABARD scheme of cluster operations, which has given very good results in one small area. Sir, the Finance Ministry officials said yesterday, that is, on March 4, that a majority of farm loans amounting to as much as Rs. 49,000/- are on the books of Cooperative Banks and Regional Rural Banks and that the entire amount will be reimbursed to all these banks. This means commercial banks which, generally, make 50 to 75 per cent provisioning for such NPAs due to stringent norms mandated by the RBI will make a neat profit.

In Maharashtra alone, there is one suicide every three hours. It got worse after 2001. It

rose to one farm suicide every 48 minutes in these four big States, and one in every two and a quarter hours in Maharashtra alone. This is the condition of farm suicides.

Maharashtra has been named as the graveyard of farmers. The State has witnessed 30,000 farm suicides in a decade. In the nation, Vidharbha is the worst place for a farmer to live in. There is an analysis by Prof. Nagaraj of Madras. It says that there have been almost 1.5 lakh farm suicides between 1997-2005, and over 89,000 suicides occurred in those four States which I have named. Importantly, Maharashtra accounts for a third of all farm suicides within these big four States. That is way, we named it as a graveyard of all farmers. I have already mentioned that farm suicides became worse after 2001. There is a rise of nearly 1900 in the yearly average of the two periods. Farm suicides have shot up after 2001 with the agrarian crisis biting deeper.

I referred to the Prime Minister's special package of Rs. 3,750 crores and the Maharashtra Government's separate package of Rs. 1075 crores for six districts of Maharashtra. The Government has been trying faithfully to help the farmers. But the results don't seem to be encouraging. One thing which the government has seriously avoided doing is allow people in distress to decide for themselves how best they need succour. Improving farm income and risk management is a far better method than giving one time grant. There is a mention of different States like Andhra Pradesh and Punjab etc. One result they have found is that bank credit is untimely, insufficient and trouble some compelling *kisans* to turn to private lenders who charge very high rate of interest. This is the position of farm loans, paticularly, in these four States which I have already mentioned in the begining.

I will come to road sector now. The highway projects have been delayed. It was reported in October 2006, that is, when after half the fiscal year was over that the ambitious NHDP is at a dead end. The NHAI has not awarded a single project in phase II and III for the North-South-East-West corridor. The Model Concession Agreement, (MCA) can cause, probably, 40 per cent of the Wholesale Price Index. It is mandatory for the NHAI to acquire 80 per cent of the land before awarding contracts.

[THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN) in the Chair]

That means the contracts, which are already being delayed, will be delayed further. The MCA took eight months to finalise serious differences of opinion between the Planning Commission and the Minisry of Road Transport but the differences still continue.

For automatic toll collection, which is nearly Rs. 600 crore project, the NHAI awarded only 10 locations with Smart Card system. Both have been held up because of vigilance inquiry. They have been awarded the contract, but they can't proceed because of the vigilance inquiry.

The Right to Information reported 46 complaints to Vigilance Department till September, 2007. The Planning Commission has proposed a separate Expressway Authority of India. Sir, when there is a lack of staff in the NHAI itself and there is also a duplication of work between the NHAI and the Expressway Authority of India, what is the logic of starting another organisation?

Sir, China is, generally, compared here. In China, there is 50,000 kilometre plus Expressway and it also plans to build another 50,000 kilometre. As against China, India has only two, one in Mumbai & Pune which is just 92 kilometres, and another is between Vadodara and Ahmedabad, which is of 93 Kilometres.

Then, whimsical change of Chairmen has taken place. Chairman Jivtesh Singh Maini, who had been selected by the Minister himself, was shifted in two months. And, Shri Pradeep Kumar was shifted in ten months. So, how can an organisation like the National Highways Authority of India work like this? What results can it give?

Port connectivity projects in Kochi, Haldia and Tuticorin have been cancelled.

There are also reports about the quality control. I want to know what is the monitoring system by which quality concerns have been taken care of at an appropriate time, instead of making a statement after years that there are quality concerns, which have been pointed out. There has to be a monitoring system. Actually, everywhere in the Government, there is a need for the monitoring system; otherwise, whatever they report afterwards is only a post-mortem.

The Chairman, NHAI, has a fixed tenure of three years. He can be transferred from one Ministry to another.

Then, I want to know whether contractual "innovations" are holding up the showpiece highway project. It continues to be a slow trudge on the fast lane. Barely 35 per cent of the contracts for the North South East-West Corridor (NHDP-II) have been awarded. This lethargy in the awarding of contracts by NHAI under the UPA is predictably bound to lead to long delays and much, much more cost. The Government is supposed to pay for lands. Now, they have found that since they can't do it, they have devised private-public partnership. Private partners will be asked to buy 80 per cent land, then only the contracts will be awarded. This will never happen. As soon as it becomes known, those who hold the land will hold it up. They will not sell. I do not know by what imagination this new system is being brought in by Model Concession Agreement (MCA). There are many examples. For example, a 27.7 kilometres long Delhi-Gurgaon Expressway, right at the door of the Capital, originally proposed to have been completed by July 2005 could not be completed even by the revised deadline of December 2006. Only two of the five flyovers have been commissioned. The cost of the project has already escalated from Rs. 550 crore to Rs. 800 crore. How much more escalation takes place in this project is yet to be seen.

Sir, due to paucity of time, I leave the international scene. Now, Sir, I come to the next point. The NHAI and its Ministry, the Ministry of Road and Surface Transport, are reported to be unhappy with the MCA. This has led to no contracts being granted under the MCA. One of the difficulties is that the MCA proposes that the work of 80 per cent of the land acquisition should be done by the contractor. Then, Sir, the NHAI has decided to crack the whip on the contractors responsible for the slowdown. At a recent NHAI board meeting, it was decided that all lingering GQ project stretches, which are not completed by June this year, will be closed and partial tolling would be allowed on completed sections. That means, there will be new tendering, new party and the fresh start of work. And, then penalties for delays are not charged because they are not given in the contract. We can't arbitrarily charge if it is not a part of the contract. Then there are massive toll leakages. I will not labour on that. ...*(Time-bell)*... Sir, I will take only a few minutes more.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): Please take only two three minutes more.

SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Sir, I will not take much time.

Now, Sir, I come to the issue related to terrorism. In regard to the terror attacks in

Hyderabad, Ajmer, Ludhiana and U.P., was just wait endlessly for the guilty to be smoked out of their caves and brought to book. Following every terror attacks, sketches of suspects are released, investigation goes on in full swing and then there is a 'famous' end to all this. The cops are clueless and terror continues unabated since one year. Then, Sir, take the Mecca Masjid blasts in Hyderabad. The role of *Harkat Ul Jihad Islami* behind the attack was pointed out by investigation and the photographs of the terrorists involved were also displaced. There were twin blasts in Hyderabad. In the twin blasts, gelatin sticks Neogel-90, an ammonium nitrate-based emulsifier, was used to power the blasts. The Ajmer blast was also like Mecca masjid blasts. They have reduced attacks, thanks to international community stepping up the heat. They are not by our doing anything. Then there were Varanasi, Faizabad and Lucknow blasts. Somewhere 15, somewhere 20 and somewhere 60 people get killed in these attacks, but after a few days these things become a matter of past. Sir, there is along list of terrorist attacks, as I have already indicated, and, therefore, I will not read it out. There is a need for more vigilance before an attack rather than after the attack. After the atack, it is only *fait accompli*. You can only report the matter. There are many examples.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF.P.J. KURIEN): Please conclude. You have covered all the points.

SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Sir, I have two more points to make.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF.P.J. KURIEN): You may take two more minutes.

SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Sir, there was no foodgrains component under the NREGP in 2006-07. In 2006-07, the amount of foodgrains released for wage employment schemes was only two million tonnes as against six million tonnes in the previous year. This has dropped through various financial years to 0.7 million tonnes in 2008-09. There is no trace of it in the Budget. Removing the food component has been unfair to the poorest of the poor. According to the report of the Comptroller and Auditor General, hundred days' work plan has been fulfilled only in three per cent cases.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF.P.J. KURIEN): Now, please conclude. There is paucity of time. The hon. Prime Minister is to make a reply at 3.00 P.M.

SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Sir, I shall now come to the last point. Bottlenecks in coal supply have gripped the power sector with several coal-based power stations reported critical and even super-critical. When the stock coal is left only for seven days, it is said to be critical and when it is left only for four days, super-critical. As per the plan of the Government, they should always have one month's stock of coal; every power station must have one month's supply of coal. Against that, you don't have even four days' stock. We are at a crisis point.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF.P.J. KURIEN): Now, you may please wind up. You have made a lot of points.

SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: I would make just a few more points. Fuel is needed for growth, as energy demand would grow at over 6.4 per cent. There would be a four-fold rise in energy demand in about 25 years. The private sector needs to bring in new technology. India's energy consumption is still very, very low and the Government must think of diversifying fast. Thank you.

1.00 P.M.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF.P.J. KURIEN): Shri D. Raja. You know that we have paucity of time. Please try to conclude within 15 minutes.

SHRI D. RAJA (Tamil Nadu): Let me try, Sir.

Sir, I shall confine myself only to the President's Address and make a few points. The President's Address, as I understand, is considered to be the political statement of the Government. It is not merely a compilation of the schemes which the Government thinks are its achievemens. The Left has provided outside support to the UPA Government for almost four years now. The Left has been playing a very positive and constructive role in criticising the Government and questioning its various policies. It is because of the Left there is a kind of balance in the actions of the Government. Having said this, I must point out that the President's Address has not addressed the ground realities, the social realities and the political realities of the country and the Government responses to these realities. The President's Address really speaks about inclusive growth. It is an admission that this economic exclusion has been taking place in this country for quite some time which has intensified the social exclusion also. I have a published document which says that by August 2007 the top riches in India have amassed more wealth and it is calculated that 533 millionaires have been possessing Rs. 12,32,135 crore. If this is the situation, what is the meaning of high growth? In any economy, the working people are the real productive force. What is the living conditions of the working people in our country? I do not want to give my view, but I would like to refer to what Mr. Arjun Sengupta Committee has said. And if the Government think that the Report is not to be accepted then the Government should make it clear what is the purpose of appointing such Committee like Arjun Sengupta Committee, Swaminathan Committee and so on. If the parliament has no time to discuss those recommendations made by these Committees, what is purpose of appointing them? Mr. Arjun Sengupta Committee has made it clear that 77 per cent or 833 million people are poor and vulnerable and they are mostly in the unorganised sector. Eighty per cent of SC/STs, 80 per cent of OBCs and 80 per cent of Muslims belong to this category of people living on less that Rs. 20 a day. If the Government refuses to accept this Report of Arjun Sengupta Committee, I would like to refer to a formal answer given by Mr. Chidambaram on the floor of the House to a question raised about per capita income of tribals and non-tribals in India, particularly in Jharkhand. Our Finance Minister, Mr. Chidambaram, has said that monthly per capita-he has not mentioned it as per capita income, he says per capita consumption-consumption expenditure for Scheduled Tribes population in rural Jharkhand was Rs. 389.14 as against Rs. 382.81 for Scheduled Castes. This is in the year 2004-05. Now, I would like to ask the Government not even Rs. 18 per day they are spending. What sort of India we are trying to build and the Government says it is the Government which believes in the policies of Pandit Jawaharalal Nehru. I would like to ask: Is it the India that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru dreamt of building in the 21st Century. In fact, the UPA Government has been dividing the country into rich and poor. The number of poor people is growing. The intensity of poverty is growing. Poverty has emerged as a biggest challenge. What is the response of the UPA Government? This is an issue which we try to address. And the Government, it seems, is not bothered about price rise. I do not know whether the Finance Minister and the hon. Prime Minister think high prices are the hallmark of high growth economy. If that is so, I warn that the UPA Government will have to pay high political prices in the coming days. In fact, this is the message that the UPA Government should have taken from the results of the Assembly elections. It is not that BJP won these

elections by the merit of their policies. By default, BJP took advanage and won the elections. This is the message that the UPA Government will have to understand, and as far as Left is concerned, yes, we have been supporting the Government. The Rightist should not bid for power and should not come to power.

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD (Bihar): Now, Left parties can withdraw the support.

प्रो॰ राम देव भंडारी (बिहार): रवि शंकर जी, आपको बहुत जल्दी है, थोड़ा इन्तजार कीजिए।

SHRI D. RAJA: This is psychological war which BJP thinks it can win, but the people of India are politically mature. Whether UPA Government understands or not, people have understood and people will give their reply.

Having said this, I must talk about other issues. As far as Indo-US nuclear deal is concerned, I understand there is no consensus in the country. If you go by the debate that took place during the Winter Session, the overwhelming opinion of the Parliament was against the nuclear deal, and this has to be kept in mind by the UPA Government. As far as the Left is concerned, we have made it clear that we are not against nuclear energy *per se,* but his Agreement is not all about nuclear energy; it is about strategic partnership. The running thread of entire Agreement is that India and the US should have strategic partnership. In fact, it was BJP which really concluded the Next Step for Strategic partnership (NSSP). Now, the American side is saying that they were about to conclude nuclear agreement when BJP was in power. This is all said by the American side, not by the BJP side. Now, the BJP will, of course, deny it. The country does not know what happened during the talks between Shri Jaswant Singh and Mr. Talbott. Many times, people have asked about it, but what I have to say is that the UPA Government should not go ahead with Indo-US nuclear deal. It is of no use discussing what are the agreements entered into by other countries. Yes, we answered this question also as to what is there in American-Chinese nuclear Agreement-123-US-Chinese Agreement, which has a clause that if there is a dispute, it will be referred to international laws. It will be sorted out by international laws. Then, there is 123-India-Japan nuclear Agreement. If there is a dispute, it will be referred to a tribunal. But, as far as we are concerned, the Hyde Act will bind us. I do not agree with the Government when they say that Hyde Act is an American national Act and we have nothing to do with this Act. After all, we should understand the American point of view. American leaders have made it clear that Hyde Act is the enabling legislation for Indo-US nuclear Agreement. How can the Government go on claiming that we have nothing to do with the Hyde Act? That is why, it is the question of India becoming strategic ally of U.S. Is it good for our country? I agree that we are a big nation and nobody can isolate our nation; nobody can undermine our nation. Having said this, we should know as to why India should become strategic partner in the global strategy that is pursued by US imperialism. That is my simple question. Why don't we encourage indigenous nuclear technology which our scientists are developing and they are confident, they are claiming that India is emerging as a global leader, as far as fast breeder technology is concerned? Hon. Member, Dr. Kasturirangan, is also sitting here. I have interacted with several nuclear scientists at Kalpakkam and other places. They all say, "India will emerge as a global leader as far as fast breeder technology is concerned." We will have to encourage our own indigenous technology. No force on earth can isolate India. But, why does the Government succumb to the pressure of the US officials. They are talking about time-frame and everything. No self-respecting country can succumb to such pressure. That is what Left has to say. That is why, we are asking the Government not to go ahead to operationalise this nuclear Agreement.

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Here, we are with you.

SHRI D. RAJA: You are with us! We are not with you because given the chance, you will take the same course; you will pursue the same course. (*Interruptions*) Anyway we will discuss it.

Sir, I must say a few things on the foreign policy position. The President's Address really refers to it and the Common Minimum Programme of the UPA Government makes it clear that while engaging with the US, the UPA Government shall pursue an independent foreign policy. Now, what will happen to that independent foreign policy? Why should we go for deepening our military cooperation with Israel? Why should we give such an impression that India is letting down the Palestinian people on their cause? You may say, no, we uphold the friendship with people of Palestine but what is actually happening on the ground. India should have condemned the apartheid walls that are being built by Israeli rulers, and, why should India cooperate to launch the spy satellite. Why India is not raising this issue strongly. That is where the US has a strategy. The United States is using Israel as its dependable ally in west-Asia, and, for South Asia, the US wants India to play as a dependable ally of the United States. The Left cannot agree to or accept this position. This is what we are telling the UPA Government.

Coming to our own neighbour, Sri Lanka, I would like to ask what is happening between India and Sri Lanka. Our External Affairs Minister, Shri Pranab Mukherjee has made a statement wherein he said, "India is closely monitoring developments in Sri Lanka and is concerned about rising upsurge in the violence and conflict in that country." It is good that the Minister has explained this position. But the Minister is asking our fishermen to maintain restraint. In the statement, he said, "we have impressed upon the Sri Lankan Navy to act with restraint for our fishermen to be treated in a humane manner."

This is one issue on which, irrespective of the political parties, I would like to request the Parliament to pay attention because it is a serious issue. Now what is going on in Sri Lanka is a problem. Even though, we say that the military solution is not the answer to the problems, which Sri Lanka is facing, there must be an effort for finding political solution. India said it, but after India said it, the Sri Lankan Government said that it would go for all out military-offensive and settle the issue. But that is not the real problem here. The human rights are being violated; the human rights are being abused in Sri Lanka, which is an issue on which the international community will have to express serious concern. But the problem here is that between India and Sri Lanka, in the Palk Straits, the Sri Lankan Government has laid the sea-mines, which is a very serious issue. The Government of India has not condemned the laying of sea-mines by Shri Lankan Government. I ask the UPA Government as to why are you keeping quiet, and, why can't you ask the Sri Lankan Government to remove these sea-mines, which is against all international norms and conventions. Even the question of land mines had been first discussed at the Hague Convention, and, now it is sea-mines, which are supposed to be more dangerous than the land mines. But the Government of India is keeping quiet and our fishermen cannot go out for fishing.

Even the Kachatheevu Agreement is being questioned. According to the Kachatheevu Agreement, Indian fishermen have got the traditional rights of using the Kachatheevu but now our fishermen cannot go there. Is it not the issue for the Government of India, the UPA Government to discuss? This is what I am asking. The UPA Government should take up this issue. While we expect a political solution to the strife that is there in Sri Lanka, we should

also take up the issue as to how these sea mines could be laid by the Sri Lankan Government. It is a very serious issue, which is in violation of all international norms and conventions and on which the Government of India cannot keep quiet. What is the proactive role that the Government of India is playing in South Asia? There was a time when Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was there, even when Shrimati Indira Gandhi was there, at that time, the international community used to look up to India. India being the leader of the non-aligned countries, India being the leader of peace and security in the world, people were looking up to India. Now, who looks up to India for anything? It is because India is not playing its due role, and why India should behave like this, particularly, as far as South Asia is concerned. India is to play a proactive role, and India should take fresh initiatives to see that the US imperialists particularly are not playing their dirty game in our region.

Then, Mr. Chairperson, I would like to move to the other issue which has been dealt with in the Common Minimum Programme of the U.P.A., and the President's Address also refers to it, that is, the reservation for the SC/ST and OBC, and I think, the Government could have done a lot more as far as this issue is concerned, and still, the Government is dithering on this issue. There is the Judiciary. We have all respect for our Judiciary. Our Judiciary should be independent. But there are certain judgments with which we cannot agree. For instance, there is a demand for reservation in respect of dalit Muslims, dalit Christians, and how to do it because the Supreme Court has got an order that the quantum of reservation cannot exceed 50 per cent. Now, what to do. If dalit Christians, dalit Muslims are to be given reservation, how to do it. There are demands from several States. The quantum of reservation will have to be left to the State Governments and the State Government can decide it. The State Governments can have that right. Having said that, I must say that we will have to bring the Supreme Court order for scrutiny to find out whether that 50 per cent ceiling can continue as it is today, or there is a need to review the Supreme Court order. Now, new issues are coming up, and the Common Minimum Programme talks about reservation in the private sector. Now, it is the 4th year of this Government. What has the UPA Government done to provide reservation to the SC/ST in the private sector? You are liquidating the Government equities in the public sector undertakings, you are weakening the public sector undertakings, and the Left has been saying that the public sector is the strength of the Indian economy. How do you protect the public sector? You are liquidating the equity, and your argument is very technical. You say that up to 51 per cent, the control will remain in the hands of the Government according to the Companies Act. So, we are bringing down the equity up to 51 per cent. This is not the question of percentage. This is the question of a policy. Are you there to protect the public sector, expand the public sector, or are you going to weaken the public sector or are you going to make the public sector vulnerable? You have not made any effort to provide reservation for the SC/ST in the public sector. Where else will the people of the SC/ST go? I do not agree with my friends in the BJP who talk about meritocracy. Yesterday, Mr. Ram Jethmalani was also speaking on that, and this merit is a myth, and people should understand this. In order to understand this thing, one should go and see the children of the Schedules Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, in what conditions they are born, in what conditions they grow, and in what conditions they live, then, you will understand the merit of those children. There is no scientific proof to show that the children of dalits, children of the SC/ST are born without any merit. Don't have that understanding. If that understanding remains with the BJP friends, I am sorry to say that this is the fascist mindset ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Yes, he is right. ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: We have mentioned about the family clans, not for the rights of the SC/ST...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI D. RAJA: No, no. I am talking about the SC/ST...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: We have not said like that. You are greatly out of context, Mr. D. Raja ...(*Interruptions*)... This is about the surname. Don't bring the surname ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI D. RAJA: No, no. He spoke about the reservation ...(*Interruptions*)... That is what I am telling you ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Sir, they have a duplicity stand on reservtion. That is the point. ...(*Interruptions*)...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): Mr. Ravi Shankar Prasad, let him say what he wants to say.

SHRI D. RAJA: And as regards OBC reservation, still it is 20 per cent reservation for OBCs; still it is pending before the Supreme Court. Here, I have got a reply from the Minister. I asked a simple question from the UPA Government: whether it is a fact that the Eighty-sixth Amendment to the Constitution has not yet been implemented, which was enacted five years go. What is the reply that the Minister has given to me? I tell you what he says. "The Eighty-sixth Constitutional Amendment provides that the State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of 6-14 years in such a manner as the State may by law..." --this is the amendment. What the Minister says is:" The notification has not yet been issued pending enactment of the consequential legislation envisaged under article 21A. Now I ask the UPA Government, Who prevented you not to bring this enabling legislation? Whom do you want to blame now? Now, you are in the fourth year in office. Who asked you not to bring? You should have brought that legislation. Now it is pending. And the matter concerned 27 per cent reservation for OBCs if before the Court. What is happening in our country under the UPA rule? This is a very serious issue that I would like to raise. And what has the UPA Government done for women reservation? Now, everybody has been speaking on this question of women reservation. Why can't you bring? It is a commitment made in the Common Minimum Programme. This is a simple question I am asking. It is your own commitment. Are you standing up to uphold your commitment? ...(*Interruptions*)... Implement your commitment. This is what I am asking. Why don't you bring forward the legislation? And you may say. "There is no consensus!" Do you think that there will be a consensus on this issue? You bring the Bill; let the country know which parties are supporting, which parties are not supporting. Do you expect that there can be a consensus? I don't think, in the name of consensus, you can postpone this issue. And it is part of your Common Minimum Programme. On that basis only, the Left has been supporting your Government. Why are we supporting this Government? You can't ask people to extend their support to the UPA Government with empty stomachs, eating the slogan of social justice or eating the slogan of secular democracy. People want to live as human beings. And this is an issue on which the Government will have to come clear and will have to make a concrete response.

Then I must take up the issue of Setu Project. What is happening to the Setu Project? My friend from the AIADMK is sitting. I want to ask him one question. It was one of the major poll promises of AIADMK in the last elections. ...(*Interruptions*)... Yes, in the manifesto, it

was a major poll promise. Now, what has happened to Setu Project? It is a development project. Why do you communalise that Project? It is not only for Tamil Nadu. It is for the entire country. And why do you scuttle that project now? If you have got any issue related to technical feasibility of the project, economic feasibility of the project or environmental feasibility of that project, I can understand. Give us a scientific reason, not to have that project. Instead of giving any scientific reason why do you link this project with the question of faith? And if you have one interpretation of faith, I have got a different interpretation of faith. That is the issue. It is your Government which has conducted several surveys, and it is your Government which cleared the project. You tell us, are you for that project or not? Don't link it with any other issue.

SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: You ask them ...(*Interruptions*)...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): Mr. Pany, you are not the Minister. Kindly sit down. ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: You ask them. ...(*Interruptions*)...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): You don't answer. That is why I said you don't answer.

SHRI D. RAJA: On this Setu Project, I think, the Left is very clear and I want that the Congress Party should also be clear on this issue, and the Government should also be clear on this issue. Now it is good that the Government has gone back to the Supreme Court filing another fresh affidavit. I hope that the Supreme Court clears it. Today, I do not know what will happen in the Supreme Court, but I hope that the Supreme Court vacates that stay. And the project cannot be stopped in the middle. The project will have to be implemented and I am saying that it will help India. It will enhance our economy; it will help our promotion of navigation. It will help the Indian economy in all other respects, employment, everything. ...(*Interruptions*)...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): Mr. Pany, please.

SHRI D. RAJA: Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, as regards the question of terrorism, I agree, terrorism has to be fought. Terrorism of all shades will have to be fought and resisted. But terrorism should not be linked with any religion. Terrorism can't be linked with Islam as western ideologists try to do. It is not a clash of civilisation that we are debating here. In the Indian situation, when we talk of terrorism, we should always try to understand that it can't be linked with one particular religion and terrorism will have to be dealt as terrorism. It has got its own history and it has got its own politics. How we should deal with terrorism is an issue. But it can't be linked with any religion.

Then, there is the question of internal security. As far as internal security is concerned, I understand, we will have to tackle the problem of Naxalism. Naxalism is not merely a law and order problem. It has certain socio-economic roots and unless you strike at the socio-economic roots of the emergence of this movement, you can't solve the problem. It is not a law and order issue. You can't solve that problem.

Having said this, I must ask a question: what about right wing extremist organisations in India? Are we aware of these right wing organisations? Even they are responsible for planting bombs and instigating violence. What about those right wing extremist organisations who are supplying all kinds of weapons in the name of fighting other religions? This is an issue on which the UPA Government will have to really think over.

Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, while concluding I must say that the President's Address has not really focussed on the distress of agricultural workers, farmers, the crisis in agriculture, the atrocities on Dalits, the growing rural-urban divide; the widening gulf between the rich and the poor, the problems of migrant toiling people and the attack on those migrated people by parochial forces. These are some of the issues that could have been focussed on. I find the President's Address, the UPA Government's policy statement, very disappointing. Thank you. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: I wish you had declared withdrawal of support today....*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: If you had not been there, we would have withdrawan the support. ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): Please. Dr. Kasturirangan.

DR. K. KASTURIRANGAN (Nominated): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I stand here to support the Motion of Thanks on President's Address. In the short period that is available to me I would like to make certain observations with respect to three strategic departments, namely, the Department of Space, the Department of Atomic Energy and the Defence Research and Development Organisation.

First, I will make a few observations about the Space Department. The President's Address has devoted a full paragraph with respect to the developments in space in the last one year and certainly made laudable remarks on some of the important developments that took place during that period. I should say, Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, that this particular department over the last 45 years has built up an impressive capability in terms of providing grassroot level developmental inputs in the context of using high technology. Today, the programme is primarily focussed on social objectives, those which are applications that contribute to the natural resource management, those which are applications that relate to communication to far-flung areas of the country, those which are applications that relate to meteorology which is important for our agriculture, and in areas like distance education, telemedicine and so on. At this particular juncture, certainly, the Department of Space has been made an important instrument for development in the country and, at the same time, it has developed some of the world's best satellite systems and most sophisticated launch vehicle systems. It is against this backdrop that the we need to look at how it will function in the coming years. Currently, we spend roughly Rs. 4,000 crores per year on the space related activities. Obviously, with the country witnessing a growth rate, which is 9 per cent annually, one need to really look at what kind of space activities the country should undertake in the coming years. Certainly, on the one side, focus on social applications of the space should be maintained. Here the issues are further level of sophistication, the need to widen the scope of these kinds of applications and bring the benefit of the space to a larger cross section of the society in the context of improving the quality of life. This is certainly possible and this should be one of the directions that the Department of Space has to address in the coming years. So, that will form the core programme even as we go into the next couple of decades. But that does not mean that the Department of Space should stop at the social objective.

[MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair]

There are many other developments that are relevant for reasons of national strategic level capability, for reasons of taking the technology to higher levels of performance in the

country in the context of having industrial base which would provide much wider utilisation in the context of country's development and, ultimately, as an instrument for international cooperation. So, obviously, one is looking at the next step on space with respect to these kinds of things. I am happy to note that there has been recent initiative in terms of examining whether we should put a man into the space; whether we should spend money in the context of planetary explorations; whether we should now reach the moon and explore the moon with respect to not only scientific aspects but also with respect to other resources of the moon and so on. So, here one will see very clearly that from the present annual budget of Rs. 4,000 and odd crores one is going to make a very big quantum jump in terms of the national investment, if we want to go alone on many of the above areas; It is in this context, Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I would like to emphasise that we should closely evolve a strategy, a policy which will enable us to go for an increased international cooperation, whether it is bilateral, whether it is regional, or whether it is international. I think this aspect of it needs to be evolved as a strategy for next 10 to 15 years to have a viable programme and at the same time, be a part of global community which is moving forward. This is one aspect of it. The second aspect of it is multidimensional character of the space programme. It has technologies of rockets; it has technologies of satellite for communication and remote sensing; it has a variety of applications. There are scientific goals. There are questions which are related to industrial manufacturing capability of the country. There are also issues related to international collaboration and cooperation and, last but not the least, with respect to strategic capability and natioal security. So, it is time to ponder over whether we should now enunciate a space policy for the country. As of now, we do not have a space policy. It is important that we start thinking about it and, may be, the Government could seriously think of enunciating a space policy which will provide the broad framework in which space activities could be conducted. Lastly, on space, I would also like to mention whether that policy will take us to the next step, whether we should enact a Space Act with respect to the various developments and whether it is both timely and appropriate to do so. At this point, I leave the Space and go to the next important strategic department, which is the Department of Atomic Energy.

Needless to emphasise, the President in her Address has mentioned specifically about power generation with nuclear energy support. The President has made specific reference to the capabilities of the Department of Atomic Energy with respect to nuclear power generation, especially the development of 500 megawatt reactors and the nuclear power production which today stands at a level which is less than 3 per cent of the total power that is generated in the country and the need to enhance the capability and the capacity of the system well beyond. Today, as I said, our pressurised heavy water reactors provide nuclear power and they use uranium as the main fuel. And we can go up to 750 MW capacity with the type of system that we build in the country. So the question that we are addressing is: Do we need to go for a higher power level reactors? And if we have to go for higher power reactors, say, 1100 to 1600 MW, obviously, we need to look at the capability, and the country, currently does not have that level of capability to immediately jump into higher power level reactors. So that brings us to the question of the need for these kinds of reactors and the necessity to have arangements with countries outside to ensure that we can build up a certain level of capacity through reactors from outside. Also, our own capacity to build through 500 MW reactors to the level that we are looking for, like, 25,000 MW in the next seven or eight years and over 50,000 MW in the next 20 or 30 years is, certainly, a kind of requirement that may not be met by the present capacity generation within the nuclear capability of this country. So, it is in this context and taking into account the environmental considerations that there is

a sense of urgency in looking at this nuclear deal and our ability to move ahead with a nuclear deal which enables us to work with the International Atomic Energy Agency, to work with the Nuclear Suppliers' Group, provide the critical inputs to our current nuclear programme itself in terms of providing the fuel and also the ability to enhance the nuclear power component in the total energy mix, in terms of procuring reactors from outside on an emergency basis. And, certainly, when we are talking of another 12,000 or 13,000 MW of power in the coming few years; obviously, this is not the final number, it needs the support of the international community. And it is here I see that we need to have this nuclear deal in position, the 123 Agreement in position. It has been initiated by the NDA. It has then been carried forward by the UPA. A lot of very good work has been done over the last two to three years in ensuring that there is a deal which is acceptable to this country in the context of many discussions that have taken place within the nuclear establishment and elsewhere. And, certainly, as my very distinguished colleague, Shri D. Raja, mentioned, it will be appropriate, of course, to look at how we could also arrive at a kind of an understanding which enables us to move in this field. But there is a sense of urgency in trying to move forward on this particular deal.

Having said that, we go to the next one, and this is where I also share the concern which my colleague , Shri D. Raja, has expressed, that is, with respect to the National Programme. We have a very good programme in the three-phase nuclear fuel cycle. Certainly, we have moved into the second-phase of this; from the pressurised heavy water reactor, which is the first one, by using uranium, we have moved into the plutonium part of it in the fast breeder reactor. The fast breeder reactor capability has already been demonstrated in the country and now we are in a position to establish this kind of reactors on a larger scale, that is, at about 500 MW capacity. We now need to move into the third one which is really the key element to the three-phase fuel programme, that is, the use of thorium, of which we have vast deposits. Almost 40 per cent of the world deposits of thorium are available in this country, and that is where the importance of the overall national programme comes into the picture. The deal with the United States makes sure that we won't have any problem in pursuing our national programme. So that is very re-assuring. The second part of the thing is that we have this particular capability which we have demonstrated up to the second-phase. But there are several technological challenges that we need to meet, as we enter into the third-phase of the programme. This third-phase of the programme could stretch into well beyond a decade considering the type of inputs which are needed to be given into this programme and also the type of resources that has to be pumped in. It is here I appeal to the Government that they look at the questions of resource requirements, the development of R&D, and the questions of technological evolution that will, ultimately, enable us to master this particular technology. And there is a sense of urgency here again if we really want to master the final phase, which is most critical, in terms of utilisation of thorium. And, on the question of thorium, obviously, this is where we say that this is not the question of self-reliance in power alone, but we also get a kind of autonomy on the question of national power generation. So, I appeal to the Government to make sure that we provide enough amount of funding, support it through the manpower and also initiate comprehensive but a very ambitious programme, with regard to education and many other aspects which will enable us to move on to the three-phase programme faster than what is currently being done and what is currently being possible.

At this point, I leave the Department of Atomic Energy's Programme and move on to the third major strategic Department, which is, the Defence Research and Development Organisation. The hon. President had made a very specific mention of the successful testing

of Agni-III, the Inter Continental Ballistic Missile, as well as the induction of Bramohs into the Indian Defence Establishment.

Certainly, these are laudable efforts. We have been seeing in the recent past, the DRDO has been demonstrating several important capabilities of relevance to the national security and national defence. But, then, these are all to be put together and synergised into a missile defence system. So, how far are we from the missile defence system, what are the gaps that need to be filled to have a viable missile defence system and what is the time-scale in which we need to establish this, are critical aspects that need to be looked into and, I hope, a comprehensive review will be carried out, or it is already being carried out, in the context of establishing a system which will ensure national security.

It takes me to another important development that has happened in the Defence Research and Development Organisation, which is, the development of the Light Combat Aircraft. Here too, the development has been very impressive. The aircraft has demonstrated its basic capability which means many of the requirements of the Air Force and I am also happy to note that a squadron or two will be inducted into the Air Force as early as it is delivered. But, then, we need to move forward because there are several improvements that need to be done. Aircraft systems and capabilities are evolving systems and, certainly, a second generation and third generation of LCA is not out of place in the context of looking ahead. It is here that there is again an urgency to look at and support programmes which are related to the LCA and also to work closely with the users, that is, the Army, the Navy and the Air Force in respect of further developments and the type of configuration that these aircraft should have and the type of level of sophistication it should go next to before we say that the LCA story is complete. But it is an impressive development. There is a need to work together with the Defence and, most importantly, to ensure that the country fully makes use of the development that has happened in this particular aircraft and, ultimately, to ensure that we have a direction for this in the coming decades with respect to building upon the capability that we have already done through the first generation LCA.

This also brings an important component of the DRDO, that is, the industrial participation. Industry, certainly, has played an important role not only in DRDO but also in the Department of Atomic Energy as well as in the Department of Space. But, what is needed in the present context is a larger participation of the industry in terms of producing the final products that the Defence can order and directly pay.

Government research departments are not geared for productionisation of the total system. Today there is still a disconnect between what the Government departments like the DAE or the DOS can do and the provision of the ultimate system which provide the necessary services. We still have to go through the internal route of developmental departments. I think these need to be brought together and there has to be a mechanism, an institutional mechanism, to be established which will enable industry to create total systems and delivery.

Also, in the context of the DRDO, I would like to make a statement regarding a closer examination of the role of the space system in the national defence. Do we need to have an overall integrated command, and what kind of an integrated space command we need to establish in the coming years? In this particular context, what are the current developments which will contribute to that kind of the concept, of an integrated space command? What do we need to do in terms of the gaps? So, these are some of the things that we need to address. I think, there is again a sense of urgency with respect to creating an integrated Space command

and the type of direction that we need to move. So, on the whole, I would like to say, Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, that the agenda for the three strategic Departments is fairly ambitious as what we need to do in the next 10 to 15 years or even 20 years. The necessary financial support should be forthcoming. I am happy to note that we continue to get the type of support that the scientists are looking forward, but there has to be a level of ambition which is far above what is currently seen in the context of planning and visualising the future of these departments. It is here that I think, the political system, the scientific community and the whole lot of user-base that use this kind of a system have to come together and look for a direction for the 21st century. I think, the present develoments assure us that this is possible. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The House is adjourned to meet at 2.30 p.m.

The House then adjourned for lunch at forty-five minutes past one of the clock.

The House re-assembled after lunch at thirty minutes past two of the clock,
MR. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

SUPPLEMENTARY DEMANDS FOR GRANTS (RAILWAYS), 2007-08

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): Sir, I lay on the Table a statement (in English and Hindi) showing Supplementary Demands for Grants (Railways) for the year 2007-2008.

MOTION OF THANKS ON THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS—*Contd.*

PROF. M.S. SWAMINATHAN (Nominated): Sir, I thank you for the opportunity. What to speak of the President's Address? It gives an inspiring account of the various steps taken to promote socially inclusive economic growth. I think, all the steps, if they are successful, they are quite a landmark in the developmental history. I, however, wish, there has also been a reference to the National Policy for Farmers presented by the Minister for Agriculture, Shri Sharad Pawarji, last November, in this House. I do not think the significance of that particular policy statement is widely understood because neither in the colonial times nor in Independent India has there been a policy for farmers. There have been many policies for *krishi* but nothing for *Kisans*. This is the first time we have a policy, in the whole history of many centuries, a policy of kisans. Now, that also makes two very important commitments. One is to change the direction of our agricultural strategy to one of promoting the net income of the farmers, not measure agricultural progress only in terms of million tonnes of wheat or rice, but what has happened to the farmers.

To give an idea, one of the reports says that even in a State like Punjab, a farmer, having 3.79 hectares growing wheat or rice today is able to earn an income which is less than the starting salary of a Class-IV servant of the Government of India. I am sure, this disparity is going to increase after the Sixth Pay Commission gives its report. Therefore, I would very much like to see that this commitment in the national policy to income orientation to the farmers-the Government has started this process--is taken.

The other very improtant part of that particular policy is how to attract and retain the youth in farming. Today, when elders want to leave farming, it is very difficult to get young people, including those who have taken their agricultural graduate degrees, and so on, from agricultural universities, taking up farming. The policy contains some prescription for doing